

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



August 2009

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced. Car parking is available at the back of the Club.

Members are requested to be seated by 7.30 pm to allow speakers a prompt start.

Visitors are welcome but are asked to give a donation towards Society funds.

CONTENTS

Programme	page 1
New Members	page 1
Summer Evening	page 2
A walk around the Haycop	
The Black Country	page 2
A tour with a difference	
Trustees of the IGMT	page 4
Broseley's Jitties	page 5
Broseley's latest tourist trail	
Footprints of Industry	page 5
The Industrial and Social Impact of John Wilkinson by Vin Callcut	
The Holyhead Road	page 6
Synopsis of talk by Neil Clarke	
Smelting Iron at Coalbrookdale	page 6
Antiques Roadshow	page 6
Antiques Roadshow coming to Blists Hill	
Bookshop	page 6
What's On?	page 6
Mailbox	page 7
No Road Sign	page 12
Pritchard Memorial	page 12

PROGRAMME

- 2 Sep *The Building of the New Free Bridge* by John Freeman
- 7 Oct AGM followed by talk *Wrekin Brewery and its Pubs* by Allan Frost
- 4 Nov *Fords and Ferries of the Severn Gorge* by Neil Clarke. A joint meeting with the FIGM at the Glass Fronted Meeting Room, Coalbrookdale
- 2 Dec Christmas Dinner
- 6 Jan *More Memories of Broseley* with Joan Griffiths
- 3 Feb *The Origins and Legacy of the Royal Oak* by Alan Lewis
- 3 Mar *Watermills in the West Midlands* by Tim Booth
- 7 Apr Annual Wilkinson Lecture, *William Withering*, by George Evans
- 5 May *The Life and Times of George Pritchard* by Michael Pope

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- David Matthews, Wokingham, Berkshire
Stephanie Bond, Broseley
Dorothy Mear, Trent Vale, Stoke-on-Trent
Mrs I Kiernan, South Reddish, Stockport.
Christine Tinsley, Newstead, Stoke-on-Trent
Gary Peters, Jackfield

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's AGM will take place on Wednesday 7 October, when the agenda will include the election of the committee. Anyone interested in putting their name forward should contact secretary Dot Cox on (01952) 883568 for a nomination form. It will be followed by a talk *Wrekin Brewery and its Pubs* by Allan Frost.

SUMMER EVENING

In June Society members enjoyed something a little different when Adrian Miles, the leader of the Haycop Preservation Group, led a walk to the old Down Well and around the Haycop, an old mining area running from Dark Lane down to the Ironbridge Road at Coneybury. Over the years this area had become very overgrown and it was Adrian, an expert on butterflies and insects, who instigated its clearance and rejuvenation. His aim was to restore the Down Well, once the main water supply for Broseley, and create a haven for wildlife in the area. In just under two years the Haycop Preservation Group have restored and rebuilt the Well, cleaned out the original holding pool to attract pondlife and cleared the meadowland of willow and scrub. They have also built user friendly footpaths, giving walkers the opportunity to see up close the birds, insects and flora which are increasingly attracted to the site.

The Haycop was at one time mined for coal probably as early as 1760, the coal being used for coking at the Coneybury blast furnaces and later at John Onions' Broseley Furnaces at the Dunge. By 1838 the coal was apparently used to fire bricks at Onions' new Broseley Tileries. By the 1850s, however, the mine was gradually being run down and in 1860 it was abandoned. After it closed the Benthall & Ironbridge Pottery Company used it to dump their waste pottery; it also served as the town dump until well into the 1940s.

Although little is known of the underground workings they would appear to have been

Society members gather for a guided walk around the Haycop led by Adrian Miles



A view of the Haycop today, where meadowland has been cleared of scrub and the original holding pool cleaned out

extensive and samples of iron bearing rock and fossils recovered from the site indicate that the depth of the shaft would have been around 300 feet. Some 50 feet downhill from the shaft the brick and stone foundations of the winding drum pit can still be seen with the remains of a brick wall nearby.

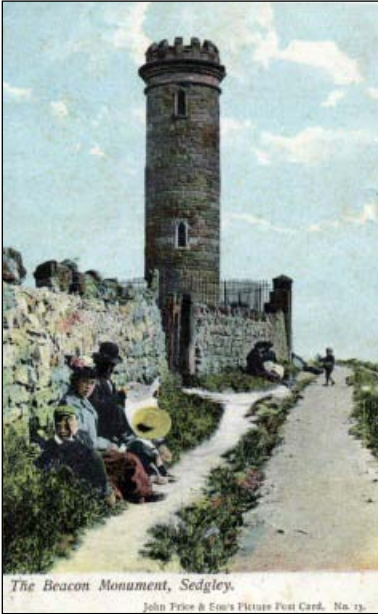
Now, thanks to Adrian and his enthusiastic band of helpers, the area is once more being put to good use for the benefit of the whole community.

The walk ended with a return to the home of Michael and Gillian Pope where members were appreciative of the light refreshments provided and the opportunity to relax in their lovely garden.

THE BLACK COUNTRY

When Ned Williams, president of the Black Country Society, offered to take members of the Society on a tour of the Black Country, he promised to show them not only the landscape and topography, but evidence of the way it was once industrialised and urbanised, as well as some of the infrastructure, in particular the canal system, that made these processes possible. He was certainly true to his promise and the Society's July outing was one to be remembered.

The Black Country is defined as that area immediately to the north and west of Birmingham which by the late 19th century had become one of the most intensely industrialised in the country. It is commonly supposed to have got its name from the smoke from the thousands of ironworks in the region which produced a level of air pollution not



This postcard of Sedgley Beacon is dated 1904. The beacon is said to be the highest point between Sedgley and the Ural Mountains 2,400 miles away to the east

seen before. Historians, however, think it more likely that the name existed even before the industrial revolution, the outcroppings of coal near the surface of the local heathland making the soil very black.

The tour began in Wolverhampton, through the Victorian industrial suburb of Blakenhall which, with its neighbour Graisbury, was home to many key Wolverhampton manufacturing names, and then crossed the northern boundary fault of the South Staffordshire coalfield to Sedgley and the central ridge of the Black Country. At 778 feet above sea level, Sedgley Beacon is the second highest point in the West Midlands and, it is said, the highest point of land between there and the Ural Mountains in Russia, 2,400 miles away. No one could actually make out the Urals, but there was a wonderful view over Cannock Chase and Birmingham to the east and to the Wrekin, Cleve Hills and Malvern Hills to the west.

From there it was on to see the entrance to the Dudley Canal tunnel which is very narrow and used to operate a system of blocks of one way traffic; it often had waiting times of eight hours or more and sometimes several days. At 3,172 yards long, it is now the second longest canal tunnel on the UK canal network today and takes in the region of an hour and ten minutes for a barge to pass through.

Close by was the Parkhead viaduct, originally a wooden construction built in 1850 to carry the

Parkhead viaduct was rebuilt in brick in 1880, leaving the old wooden structure inside. It carried the old Stourbridge to Walsall railway over the Dudley Canal



Stourbridge to Walsall railway over the Parkhead locks on the Dudley Canal. In 1880 it was strengthened by building a brick structure around it – it is believed that the original wooden structure is still encased within.

From Parkhead it was on to Kates Hill, which looks out over the southwestern half of the Black Country and offers an unusual view of Dudley Castle, and then to the Bumble Hole Conservation Centre where the Dudley No 2 Canal meets the Netherton Canal at Windmill End junction. Bumble Hole was once a coal mining area based on the South Staffordshire coalfield, and an old engine house built in 1831, and known as Cobb's Engine House, can still be seen. This once housed a Watt beam engine for pumping water from the deep coal mines in the area into the canal. According to legend, the word 'bumble' means 'murmuring waters', the area getting its name from



Cobb's Engine House was built in 1831 to accommodate a Watt beam engine which pumped water from the many deep coal mines that once riddled Bumble Hole and Warren Hill

Photograph courtesy Steve Dewhurst



These cast iron footbridges over the canals at Bumble Hole were built in about 1830 at Tipton

the sound of water running past an old cottage in the vicinity.

Netherton tunnel was the last canal tunnel to be constructed in Britain and was built in 1858 at a cost of £302,000 to relieve the bottleneck of the nearby Dudley tunnel. 3,027 yards long and 27 feet wide it was built to allow two way traffic, was brick lined throughout and had a towpath on each side; this meant that horses could be used, overcoming the need for 'legging'. The towpaths were originally lit by gas though this was later converted to electricity; they are now unlit.

There were also some interesting cast iron footbridges on the site, all built around 1830 at nearby Tipton.

Next stop on the tour was Mushroom Green, a rare survivor of the type of squatter settlement which was the direct result of the area being industrialised. Established on the banks of Cradley Pool, a huge artificial lake built to provide a head of water for the forges in the Stour valley, the area was the beginning of the urbanisation of the Black Country; the pool was drained in the 1880s. Closer to home, Broseley Wood had the same kind of beginnings but Mushroom Green, like Broseley Wood, is now much regenerated and a sought after place to live.

On the edge of Mushroom Green an old chain shop, built in the mid 19th century, still stands. Now part of the Black Country Living Museum, visitors can watch demonstrations of chain being made.

Netherton Tunnel was the last canal tunnel to be constructed in Britain and was built in 1858 to relieve the bottleneck of the nearby Dudley tunnel



Visitors to this old chain shop on the edge of Mushroom Green can watch demonstrations of chain being made



The final stop on this tour with a difference was to climb Merry Hill. Not as one might think to scale bricks and mortar, but to look down into the Tipseyford Brook valley to see the modern shopping complex which bears its name. As Ned said, the new face of the Black Country.

TRUSTEES OF THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST

Gillian Pope, Chairman of the Society, and Neil Clarke, long time committee member and editor of the Society's Journal, have been invited to become Trustees of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Gillian says she was both surprised and honoured to be asked to be a Trustee and has accepted with pleasure. Her family has had connections with the Gorge over several centuries and she is very interested in the ongoing development of the history of the area. She also felt that it was a wonderful opportunity for the Society to have a closer liaison with the Trust and for the importance of its place in local history societies to be recognised. Neil also sees this as an ongoing association stretching back to the time when he was chairman of the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums in the early 1970s.

BROSELEY'S JITTIES

A new plan designed to promote Broseley's jitties as a tourist trail has been given the go ahead and is now well under way. Broseley Partnership, a steering group dedicated to raising Broseley's profile as a tourist area, has been awarded a Better Welcome grant and has commissioned the company Image Makers to undertake this project in conjunction with Broseley Partnership and Shropshire Council.

The starting point of the trail will be the Pipe Museum in Duke Street and visitors will be encouraged to explore the area taking their own route. An illustrated leaflet has been produced marking the location of the various jitties and outlining their history. There will also be a new interpretation panel at the Pipe Museum.

Swing posts in the jitties will inform people about the historical life of the area, while markers will indicate points at which people should listen to the audio tour. This audio tour, which has been produced using members of Broseley's Amateur Dramatic Society BroADS, will be available for download from any computer onto either an MP3 player or a mobile phone.

The area of the jitties was first settled over 400 years ago by immigrant workers who were attracted to jobs in the coal and clay mines as well as the pipe factory and ironworks. Originally an assortment of squatter cottages built on common land, today it is an attractive sought after area, with nowhere else in the vicinity quite like it.



One of Broseley Wood's jitties, the Ding Dong Steps were so named after the ringing noise made by the soles of the boots worn by local workers

FOOTPRINTS OF INDUSTRY CONFERENCE 3-6 JUNE 2009

This conference was organised by Paul Belford on behalf of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust at Coalbrookdale for members of the Newcomen Society, the Historical Metallurgy Society and the Association for Industrial Archaeology. Vin Callcut reports on the proceedings.

The opening address was given by Michael Darby who traced the development of Coalbrookdale from ironworks to museum from 1709 to 1959. The rest of the papers covered a very wide ranging selection of topics on the results of the industrial revolution, mostly in the UK but with others from Europe and USA.

The Industrial and Social Impact of John Wilkinson was the title of a paper given by Vin Callcut in which he summarised the biography of the man and the impact of his many industrial and domestic interests. This was not easy in the time allotted as there was such a wide geographic range as well as a multiplicity of industrial, financial and social interests. It gave a basis, helping towards an estimate of his impact during his life and enduring afterwards. The way in which he is now commemorated was covered so that an assessment of his continuing impact could be made.

Besides the credit already given to John Wilkinson for his many achievements, there was an obvious correction to be made where he is not sufficiently recognised. It was shown to be clear that, without his tremendous efforts in maintaining the support of the Broseley businessmen throughout the planning and approval process, the iron bridge would probably not have been built of iron. The name 'Ironbridge' would not therefore have been applied to part of Madeley. The area would probably not have gained World Heritage Site status. A very large proportion of the present tourist income of the Telford area should therefore be allocated to the credit of John Wilkinson. For the paper, the value of his impact could only be offered in monetary terms. After taking into consideration the effects of inflation, the values resulting were surprisingly large. They will be

kept under review and Neil Clarke has booked for an update to be presented for the Society's 2011 Wilkinson lecture.

The other papers covered a fascinating range of topics and brought out delightful snippets of information that are not always apparent. One such, mentioned by one of the many archaeologists present, was that it was essential for anyone expecting recognition in his profession to use two trowels – something that does not appear to happen in television programmes such as Time Team. One trowel, he said, needs to be newish, sharp and effective. The other must be old and well worn so that it can be used during on site discussions to give suitable gravitas to points made and opinions expressed!

THE HOLYHEAD ROAD

Neil Clarke recently gave a talk at Wellington Civic Centre on the Holyhead Road in which he surveyed the history of the road from the Roman Watling Street to the present day A5, before focusing on the improvements to the Holyhead Road in East Shropshire under the direction of Thomas Telford in the 1820s and early 1830s. He highlighted features along the route between Shrewsbury and the Staffordshire border, including cuttings and embankments, new sections of road, bridges, milestones, toll houses and coaching inns; he also read extracts from accounts written by a number of travellers and users of the road.

SMELTING IRON AT COALBROOKDALE

Dr Jane Essex of Keele University shows a young visitor how to make charcoal for smelting iron 'microstyle' at the Coalbrookdale 300 Festival held in July



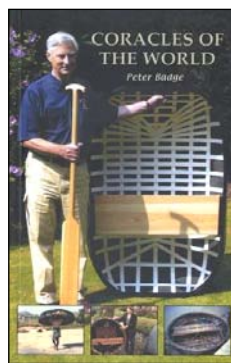
ANTIQUES ROADSHOW

The Antiques Roadshow will be coming to Blists Hill on Thursday 17 September when the BBC will be filming from 9.30 am – 4.30 pm.

Some of Britain's leading antiques and fine arts specialists will be available to offer free advice and valuations. People with large pieces of furniture or other big items can send details and photographs to: Antiques Roadshow, BBC, Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 2LR or email them to: antiques.roadshow@bbc.co.uk. It may be possible to arrange to look at the item in advance and organise transportation to the venue.

BOOKSHOP

Coracles of the World by Peter Badge, 2009, Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, price £6.95.



While many people think that the only areas which have a coracle tradition are West Wales and the Severn at Shrewsbury and Ironbridge they were also to be found all over Wales and in parts of Ireland, Scotland and the United States. They are also still in use today in India,

Tibet and Vietnam. *Coracles of the World* deals in detail with British and Irish coracles as well as those outside the United Kingdom. One of the chapters deals with those of Ironbridge, Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth.

The author Peter Badge, a founder member of the Coracle Society and its current President, has based his book on over thirty years' research. He would welcome any comments via his email address pbadge@globalnet.co.uk.

WHAT'S ON?

Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival

Weekend of 25-27 September

This year's festival will also celebrate the 300th anniversary of the start of the industrial revolution. The Iron Bridge will be illuminated on Friday and Saturday evenings, while during the day on Saturday there will be a Victorian funfair and various street entertainment. Weather permitting



The Iron Bridge all lit up at the Ironbridge Heritage Festival in 2008

there will be an acrobatic fly past by the Red Arrows as well as a firework display scheduled for 8.00 pm.

On Sunday Maw's Craft Centre will have food and craft stalls and static steam displays as well as other entertainment.

For further information on the Heritage Festival visit www.ironbridgeheritagefestival.co.uk.

Newcomen Society

Thinktank, Birmingham

Wednesday 7 October, 7.00 pm

Society member Vin Callcut will be giving a talk entitled Birmingham Copper and Brass 1851-1951.

Other Ironbridge Gorge Museum Activities

Half Term Workshops

26 October-1 November

Fun workshops are being held at Coalport China Museum, Jackfield Tile Museum and Enginuity on various days over this period.

Blists Hill

Saturday 7 November, 6.00 pm

Fireworks Spectacular

For more information visit www.ironbridge.org.uk or phone 01952 884391.

Coalbrookdale Gallery, next door to Enginuity

Coalbrookdale 300 Exhibition

2 April – January 2010

10.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, check before travelling

Admission free

This exhibition is being staged to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of the industrial

revolution and includes works from the Sir Arthur Elton Collection, held by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.

Advance Notice for 2010

John Randall Conference

Saturday 4 September, 2010

John Randall Primary School, Queen Street, Madeley

This conference will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth and the 100th anniversary of the death of John Randall who was born in Raddle Hall in Broseley in 1810. A plaque commissioned by the Society commemorating his birthplace was recently presented to the present owners Ian Baker and Nuala O'Kane. John Randall was a local historian and is well known for his *History of Broseley and its Surroundings*. For much of his life he worked as a china painter at both the Coalport and Rockingham China Works, specialising in painting birds. He was also an accomplished geologist and a consultant in mining geology. Although born in Broseley, he lived much of his life in Madeley where he died in 1910.

The provisional programme of speakers at this conference will be Barrie Trinder, *Randall the Historian*; Hugh Torrens, *Randall the Geologist*; Roger Edmundson, *Randall the Ceramicist*; Neil Clarke, *Randall and Broseley*; Shelagh Lewis, *Walk (Randall's Madeley)*.

Full details will be available later.

MAILBOX

I am trying to trace my great great grandmother Matilda Jones. She was born in Broseley in about 1818 and baptised in St Leonard's Church on 10 May 1818. Her parents were Charles and Joanna Jones. On her marriage certificate to William Thairs in 1847 (at Kingston-Upon-Thames in Surrey) her father Charles' occupation is that of miner – either coal or iron. Matilda continued to live in Surrey until her death in 1895.

I should appreciate any help that members of your Society might be able to give.

mwpaddockg05@tiscali.co.uk

There was a Charles Jones who, in 1793, lived in what was described as "An ordinary Tenement

and two small Gardens situate in Broseley Wood the Lease commencing Lady Day 1780 at the Annual Rent of --". The annual value was £5. I have records of various other Joneses but this is the only Charles I can find.

Steve Dewhurst

I am writing to thank your Society for the trove of information available as I research my wife's grandfather's family. Her grandfather was born in East Ham, London in 1862, and his father was one Benjamin Suart, born in Kippax, Yorks.

Some years ago when looking for Benjamin Suart I found your *Extracts from Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*, the 28 January 1898 issue of which contained a death notice for one B Suart, Esq, of Alison House, Broseley, an encaustic tile manufacturer. This was puzzling, as all the records we had to the 1881 census had the family in West Ham. However, from the report it was clear that Broseley's Mr Suart was indeed our Mr Suart. The two daughters, Edith and Florrie, so often part of musical performances at the Wesleyan Hall, fitted with the earlier census records, as did Mr Suart's position as a businessman of what appears to have been some substance.

Until recently, I had been unable to locate Alison House. I recently bought an O/S map reprint from 1901, which had a Dr William Dyson at Alison House in a directory on the back. However, I was amazed to find Vin Callcut's article in your February 2008 Newsletter. What an amazing history! Interestingly, the same map refers to a Mr Roden at Alison Villa, Upper Church Street.

Finding that my wife's great grandfather, his wife and two of their daughters had lived in Broseley was one thing. Another was the fact that we had visited the Ironbridge area in 1990, on our first visit to Britain. I had thought a short side trip to the cradle of the industrial revolution would be interesting, so we had driven to Telford to explore the Severn Gorge. The closest we came to Broseley, however, was the south end of the Iron Bridge.

Later I discovered that Benjamin Suart had spent his last years in Broseley, then left by train from

Coalport Station on his way back to his final rest in London.

Phil Sunderland

psunderl@shaw.ca

Thank you for your comments about our website. It is always good to know that people have found it helpful. It is also interesting that you found the report on one of our talks of use in your research.
Editor

Aloha from Hawaii. My name is Regina Rossi Pfeiffer and my grandfather, H S Burroughs, was born in 1890 in Broseley, which he described as being "situated about one mile on the west side of the river Severn at Ironbridge and all uphill from there". His father was a tenant farmer on the estate of Lord Forester, and the name of the home in which my grandfather grew up was called the Woodlands.

I have long wanted to visit where my grandfather had been born – I knew it was in Shropshire because he always referred to himself as a Shropshire lad – but having been born in Hawaii never expected to be able to visit his boyhood home. However, I shall be in England in early July and plan to visit Broseley.

If you are interested in my grandfather's memoirs, I shall be happy to share them with your Society.

Regina Pfeiffer

earlandregina.pfeiffer@hawaiiantel.net

Woodlands Farm is no longer used for agriculture although both the house and old barn, now converted into a house, are still to be seen in Woodlands Road



Photograph courtesy Steve Dewhurst

It is amazing that someone from Shropshire ended up in Hawaii! I live very near Woodlands Farm which ceased to be used for agriculture about 20 years ago although the house and old barn, now converted into a house, still stand.

According to the 1901 census Thomas Richard Burroughs (61) lived at the farm with his wife Mary Ann (42) and they were both born in Broseley. They had three children, John Reginald (12), Herbert Stanley (10) and Cecil Doughty (5). The Doughty name is interesting as they were a local family owning barges and brickworks.

I have also been looking at other local censuses which show that in 1891 Thomas was at Woodlands Farm and is listed as a rope maker's clerk. I believe he was the son of John Burroughs who had a rope walk at Ladywood. The 1881 census shows him and what must have been his first wife, while the 1851 census shows what I think must be a young Thomas (aged 11) and his father John.

You might also like to have a look at this <http://www.broseley.org.uk/Papers/1880.mht> which has an article on John Burroughs (note his father was also called Thomas). It mentions the counting house (these days it would be called bookkeeping/accounts) run by T R Burroughs who I assume is your Thomas.

The 1881 and 1871 censuses also show the Doughty family at the Tuckies – an old house in Jackfield which is close to Broseley, while the 1861 census shows them (including Mary Ann) at Calcutts House – also an old house in Jackfield and now a Bed and Breakfast establishment.

*I should be most interested in seeing your grandfather's memoirs.
Steve Dewhirst*

Thanks for your prompt reply. The second of the two children, Herbert Stanley, is my grandfather. Since he emigrated first to Canada and eventually to Hawaii, as far as I know his two children never met their paternal family. I only remember my mother telling me that each year her paternal grandmother would send plum pudding!



The house in Hawaii where Regina's grandparents lived. They can be seen seated on the verandah, but it is not known who the third person is

The information about my great grandmother Mary Ann Doughty is interesting. According to my grandfather's memoirs, his mother's family operated a brick and tile works in Jackfield.
Regina

Regina subsequently visited Broseley, staying at Calcutts House, the B&B in Jackfield in which a branch of her family had lived in 1861. Steve took her around the spots mentioned in her grandfather's memoirs.

According to Regina her grandfather emigrated to British Colombia where he became a merchant seaman. During his travels he visited Hawaii, decided he liked it, and went to live there. He eventually became chief of police on a plantation, only returning to Vancouver on his retirement.

Regina's grandmother was native to Hawaii and the family was reputedly descended from one of Captain Cook's crew.

Regina wrote to thank Steve saying:
Thank you so much for all your assistance and information. Meeting you and sharing my grandfather's memories with you was a great pleasure and honour. Your interest in my grandfather and his family has helped me to learn so much more about myself. One of my greatest dreams, to visit my grandfather's birthplace, has come true in ways I could never have envisioned.

Regina's grandfather's memoirs make for fascinating reading. It is hoped to publish them in the Society's Journal at some future date.

Editor

I found Sandbach Parker and various mentions of the family on your very excellent website. However, I cannot find any mention of where they actually lived. It is Douglas Sandbach Parker and his parents in whom I am particularly interested. I should be grateful for any help.

Judith Bulger

judith.bulger@btconnect.com

This obituary of 25 March 1939 gives all the places, though it is not on the website yet:

Late Mrs Sandbach Parker

Well known in Shropshire, where she had lived for many years, Mrs Emily Ethel Knatchbull Parker died in her 80th year at Leamington Spa on Sunday. Although she was not a native of Shropshire, Mrs Parker had spent a great deal of her life in the county and had lived at Buildwas Park, Aston Hall, Oswestry; Benthall Hall, Broseley; Harnage House, Cound; and at Frodesley. She left Shropshire about eight years ago to live at Leamington. She lived at Benthall Hall from 1905 to 1916, coming here from Oswestry, where her husband Mr S Sandbach Parker, a well-known Liverpool merchant, died. A person of generous disposition, she was well liked and was particularly fond of children, for whom she was always giving parties. She was also a keen supporter of the church. The late Mrs Parker was the eldest daughter of the late General F M Birch.

It was her wish to be buried at Benthall and she was laid to rest in the only available space in the old churchyard on Tuesday. A service was held in Benthall Church . . . the chief mourners were: Capt Ernest Parker, Harnage House, Cound (stepson); Capt Douglas Parker, Harnage House (son); Mrs Russell-Roberts, London; Mrs C Hastings Dent, London and Mrs Grey-Thompson, Darlington (daughters); Mr Donald Parker, Leamington and Mr C C Dent, Leamington (grandsons).

Steve Dewhirst

Can anyone give me any information on Baynham's Crossing? My family originated from Shropshire and I have heard my grandmother tell stories of my great grandmother who lived in a railway crossing cottage. She was apparently killed by a train while opening the gate. My



Photograph courtesy Ron Miles

Baynham's Crossing on the old Severn Valley Railway was just by the Craven Dunnill tile factory in Jackfield. Part of this factory, now the Tile Museum, can be seen on the right, while on the left is the old signal box and part of the crossing keeper's cottage. The date of the photograph is unknown, but obviously some time after the line's closure in 1963 as the lady with the small child is standing where the railway line would have run

maiden name is Baynham and it is not a common name so maybe there is a connection.

Lin Webster

linwebster66@googlemail.com

According to Ron Miles, a resident of Jackfield, Baynham's Crossing was on the old Severn Valley Railway, which was built between 1858 and 1862 to link Hartlebury with Shrewsbury, a distance of 40 miles. It was situated just by the Craven Dunnill tile factory in Jackfield (now the Tile Museum and one of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums) and was so named after the family who lived in the crossing keeper's cottage. The story goes that Mrs Baynham was closing the gates against oncoming road traffic when one of the automatic locking devices failed and the gate began to swing back across the railtrack. To avoid a disaster, Mrs Baynham ran across the track and tried a second time to slam the gate shut. The locking device again failed and the gate bounced back against her, knocking her into the path of the oncoming train. The accident apparently happened some time between 1946 and 1952. This section of the line was closed in 1963 and the crossing gates have long since been removed.

I am researching my family history and have discovered that my ancestors came from Broseley. They were called John and Elizabeth (née Rhodes) Armishrew (or Armstrong). In her will dated 1777 there is mention of three tenements between James Howells the Butchers and The Sign of the Blue Ball. The middlemost tenement backed onto some land near Crews Park which they rented from a George Fothergill for ten shillings a year. Their daughter Rachel married Samuel Aston (or Astons) and they, along with their young family, moved to Merthyr Tydfil for work around 1785. I should love to find out where Samuel worked in Broseley and also how they would have got to Merthyr from Broseley – would they have travelled by boat or by horse and cart? I was wondering if you had ever heard of the Blue Ball and if so whether the building is still standing.

Jody Wood

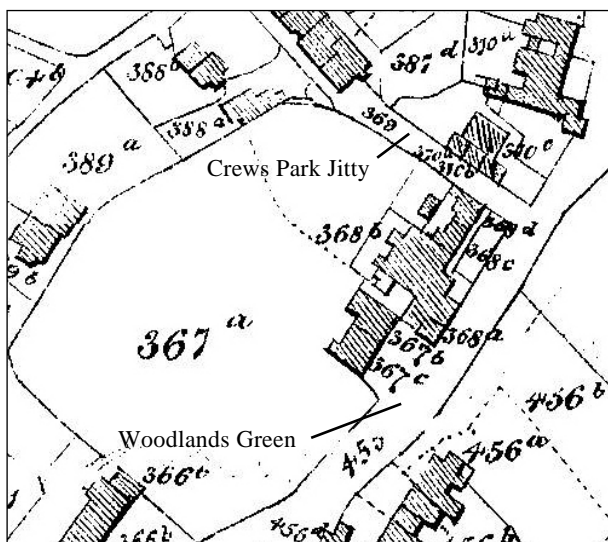
jody.wood@gmail.com

There is a reference to the Blue Ball in the book Inns and Pubs of Broseley by D Shinton:

“This house, with its heraldic title, was said by Randall to be in Broseley Wood. It was closed before 1879 and its location is unknown although someone may know of it from their deeds. A Mr Davies was the last landlord.”

It now seems that you have placed it near Crews Park, which is now a small track (we call them jitties) with one or two houses still standing

The tithe survey map of 1838 shows the plots in question. The buildings have long since been demolished and today there is a modern bungalow on the site



Maypole House on the corner of Woodlands Green and Crews Park Jitty is presumed to have been the old Blue Ball before being renamed the Maypole Inn. It has long since been closed as a pub and is now a private residence

although a number have been demolished. From the map taken from the tithe survey of 1838 you will see that plot 367a is actually Crews Park itself after which presumably the jitty was named, while plot 368a would be the butcher’s shop as plot 368b is listed as being a slaughterhouse. The Blue Ball was probably plot 370d at the junction of Crews Park Jitty and Woodlands Green. It was presumably renamed the Maypole but has long since closed and is now a private house.

It seems likely that your ancestors also had plots 368c and 368d which would put two of them between the butcher’s and the pub. Unfortunately by 1887 these properties had been demolished and today there is a modern bungalow on the site.

The Astons were a mining family and it is interesting that they moved to Merthyr. They may have been recruited by John Guest who moved from Broseley to run ironworks and mines there. Guest became manager of the Dowlais works in 1767 and the family continued to run the business well into the 19th century. Guest died in 1797 and the works were taken over by his son Thomas who retained strong links with Broseley. The company eventually became Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds, now known as GKN plc.

The following is an account of Guest’s trip to Merthyr.

“About the year 1760 he started for Wales. The road was rugged, mountainous; difficulties and dangers were to be apprehended; but his plain habits and strong constitution enabled him to treat

these trifles as of little account. He had a companion in his travels, and this companion was an old faithful servant of the family, named Ben, who rode on a grey mare; and when they set out to seek their fortunes, the master rode and the man walked behind. But there was not the distance then that now exists between master and man, and so it fell out that honest Guest could not ride in comfort while his old friend and servant trudged in the mire; so Ben was persuaded, very much against his wish, to mount the grey mare behind his master; and in this homely fashion, sometimes walking, and occasionally resting, for the sake of the poor animal, whom they treated with care and consideration, they jogged along in the direction of the distant, the unknown land of Wales."

Steve Dewhirst

I am researching the history of a car owned by Sir John Robert Stratford Dugdale, who was president of the Broseley's Wilkinson Society. I am trying to get in touch with relatives and hope you can be of help.

Roberto Verboon

robertoboonski@hetnet.nl

The Dugdale family live at Tickwood Hall, Wyke near Much Wenlock. The link gives the details <http://www.muchwenlockguide.info/town-council/town-council-councillors.shtml>

Steve Dewhirst

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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NO ROAD SIGN

This 1742 signpost with a difference can be found just off the road from Linley to Willey. Discovered when a drainage channel was being cleared, it is now to be seen alongside the footpath to Linley. Its inscription reading 'This is No



Road' seems a much nicer way of deterring unwanted visitors than 'Private property. Keep out!' Grid reference for those who are curious is SO6898. For pictures of other interesting places visit www.geograph.org.uk.

PRITCHARD MEMORIAL

In the *May 2009 Newsletter* it was stated that the Pritchard Memorial, situated in Broseley Square, was demolished in the late 1930s. According to



Ray Johnston, who was involved in its demolition, it was actually knocked down in the early 1950s.

Newsletter is sympathetic to the concerns of certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to see their email address appear in the public domain. If there is anyone who does not wish their contact details to be published, they are welcome to make use of the Society's email address steve@broseley.org.uk. Any respondent without access to email may pass on information to any member of the committee.

To see the *Newsletter* in full colour visit

www.broseley.org.uk.

For information and advice email

steve@broseley.org.uk

To make it even more accessible, the Society's website now has a link through from the Broseley community site www.BroseleyOnline.co.uk.